

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

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S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 11535

EXDIS

LE.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CB

SUBJ: NEW POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS IN CAMBODIA

SECSTATE PASS NCS, VIA, SECDEF, CJCS

REFS: (A) PHNOM PENH11505 (B) PHNOM PENH 11534

1. THE POLITICAL ARGANGEMENTS REPORTED IN REFTELS
MEET OUR PROXIMATE GOALS.

2. THEY PRESERVE A FACADE OF SOLIDARITY, THROUGH
CONTINUATION OF THE HIGH POLITICAL COUNCIL, RETENTION
OF IN TAM AS PRIME MINISTER, AND ACHIEVEMENT OF AN
AGREEMENTBETWEENTHE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNMENT, AND
PARLIAMENT ON WORKING TOGETHER. WITH SIRIK MATAK'S
REPUBLICAN PARTY FULLY ENGAGED PN GOVERNMENT FOR THE
FIRST TIME SINCE LAST YEAR'S BOTCHED PARLIAMENTARY
ELECTIONS, THE ARRANGEMENTS REPRESENT A SIGNIFICANT WIDENING
OF THE GOVEGNMENT BASE. THE WEAK IN TAM CABINET HAS
BEEN REINFORCED BY THE ADDITION OF EXECUTIVE AND
POLITICAL TALENT AT VICE MINISTERIAL LEVEL. ITS
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PERFORMANCE SHOULD IMPROVE SOMEHAT, AND IT SHOULD ACT
AS A MORE EFFECTIVE COUNTERWEIGHT TO LON NOL'S CURRENT
THRUST FOR GREATER POWER.

3. AT THE SAME TIME THERE ARE DISQUIETING ASPECTS. EXTRAVAGANT US PRESSURE AND INTERVENTION WERE NECESSARY TO ATTAIN THE COMPROMISE. THERE IS A QUESTION, WHEN IT WILL BECOME CLEAR THAT THIS GOVERNMENT LIKE ITS PREDECESSORS CAN MAKE ONLY LIMITED HEADWAY AGAINST THE HARSH PROBLEMS CAMBODIA FACES, OF WHETHER THE POLITICS OF COALITION WE HAVE BEEN URGING ON THE CAMBOBIANS WILL CONTINUE TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO THEM AS A VIABLE OPTION. THE NEW POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS ALSO DO NOTHING TO RESOLVE THE BREACH BETWEEN THE ARMY AND THE CIVILIANS WHICH CURRENT CONTACTS SUGGEST MAY BE WIDENING (PHNOM PENH 11504). THE PRESSURE TO HTGITATPT TO THE MILITARY MAY WELL BECOME OVERWHELMING BOTH IN THE FANK AND IN MANY CIVILIAN GROUPS, SHOULD THE UN VOTE GO AGAINST THE REPUBLIC. ALTHOUGH BY RETAINING IN TAM AND THE INDEPENDENCE, THE CABINET MAY BE SOMWHAT LESS VULNERABLE TO POPULAR UNREST THAN ALTERNATIVE FORMATION , IT IS NOT IN ANY SENSE A POPULAR FORMATION; THE EXCESSIVE NUMBER OF PORTFOLIOS WILL BE WIDELY CRITICEZED AS EVIDENCE THAT ONCE AGAIN THE POLITICIANS ARE MERELY DIVIDING UP THE PIE. FINALLY, THE HALF LIFE OF IN TAM'S COMMITMENT TO ANY POLITICAL ARRANGEMENT IS ALWAYS SHORT, AND WE MUST EXPECT HIM TO RESIGN AFTER THE KHMER QUESTION IS VOTED ON THE UN, IF NOT BEFORE.

4. THIS FRAGILITY KEEPS THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS FROM BEING OF MAXIMUM USE IN THE UN STRUGGLE AS EVIDENCE OF KHMER RALLYING AROUND THEIR LEADERSHIP. NONETHELESS, THEY SHOULD BE PLAYED AS SUCH TO THE DEGREE POSSIBLE

5. IN TERMS OF INTERNAL PERFORMANCE, THE STRUCTURE OF THE NEW CABINET RATIFIES MAJGEN THAPPAMA NGINN'S DEFACTO POSITION OF CHIEF OF THE DRAFT CAMPAIGN, AND SHOULD MAKE SURE THAT HE HAS THE MEANS TO SUCCEED. THE ECONOMIC SIDE IS NOW UNIFIED UNDER PLAN MINISTER KHY TAING LIM, WHO WILL BE VERY RESPONSIVE TO OUR
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PROPOSALS. FOR THE REST OF THE CABINET, THERE IS NO WHERE

TO GO BUT UP.
ENDERS

NOTE BY OC/T: MESSAGE AS RECEIVED.

SECRET

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